GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:876
ANSWERED ON:04.03.2008
STARVATION DEATHS IN TEA GARDENS
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether number of deaths have occurred in the tea gardens due to starvation;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years;

(c) whether the Government has initiated any rehabilitation and revival measures for the closed tea garderns;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for providing adequate livelihood for the workers engaged in tea industry?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) & (b) : The Government is not aware of the deaths which have occurred in the tea gardens due to starvation.

(c) & d) : The Government announced a Rehabilitation package for 33 tea gardens lying closed as on 1.4.2007 with the aim to enable the owners of the closed tea gardens to revive the gardens in the interest of tea garden workers and considering the importance of the industry in the export performance of the country. The net implication in respect of the components of the scheme works out to Rs. 38.65 crore.

(e): Several steps have been taken for helping the tea industry for increasing the production and productivity and thereby decreasing the cost of production so as to sustain the industry. A Special Purpose Fund has been set up for extending financial assistance by way of long term loan and subsidy for taking up large scale uprooting and replanting of the old age tea bushes. This activity will generate additional mandays at the rate of 22 million days per year over the next 15 years beside safeguarding the livelihood of the existing 30 lakh workers. Under the Human Resource Development Programme of Tea Board, financial assistance is being extended for the welfare of the tea garden workers, which would cover medical facilities, drinking wate, sanitation, education stipend for wards of the workers and also training programme for the workers etc.